

19 05-GS-59 VOTED: The Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ votes in favor of the resolution,
20 “Religious Freedom for Native Hawaiian Prisoners.”

21

22 **RELIGIOUS FREEDOM FOR NATIVE HAWAIIAN PRISONERS**

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24 WHEREAS, In response to Jesus’ teaching and the aloha of all people, the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the
25 United Church of Christ recognizes the inherent right of Native Hawaiians to practice their ancient and traditional
26 religion as guaranteed by law and pledges its support to those Native Hawaiians;

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28 WHEREAS, Native Hawaiian religious rites are protected under the Constitutions of the United States of America,
29 the State of Hawai`i, the State of Oklahoma, the Religious Land Use and Institutionalized Persons Act of 2000 (42
30 USCS § 2000cc), and the American Indian Religious Freedom Act (42 U.S.C. § 1996);

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32 WHEREAS, the free exercise of religion for Hawai`i prisoners at the Diamondback Correctional Facility in
33 Watonga, OK, is making strides to provide minimal religious opportunities as required by law:

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35 WHEREAS, inter-religious and interfaith spiritual accompaniment requires specific training, theological hospitality
36 to different religious expressions, and a commitment to mutual respect of diverse belief systems;

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38 WHEREAS, our local United Church of Christ churches and the Oklahoma United Church of Christ `ohana
39 (family)— qualified, trained and ordained advocates now have access;

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41 WHEREAS, Native Hawaiian prisoners are 6,000 miles from their homeland, `ohana and religious leaders; and that
42 up to 2,500 Hawai`i pa`ahao are located in correctional facilities in Oklahoma, Arizona, Mississippi, and Colorado;

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44 WHEREAS, spirituality, and its diversity of practice, is an essential part of rehabilitation;

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46 WHEREAS, Native Hawaiian prisoners through the Native Hawaiian Religion and Culture Group have requested
47 advocacy, support, and pastoral presence at weekly spiritual gatherings and specific holy day observances;

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49 WHEREAS, the Native Hawaiian prisoners’ United Church of Christ kūpuna (elders) and kahu (pastors) have
50 commended their `ohana to the care of Oklahoma area United Church of Christ clergy; and that some of the pa`ahao
51 (prisoners) are sons and yōhana of our own churches in the Hawai`i Conference United Church of Christ;

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53 WHEREAS, the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches United Church of Christ of the Hawai`i Conference
54 United Church of Christ is in covenantal relationship with all the settings of the United Church of Christ;

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1 THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ recognizes
2 the inherent right of Native Hawaiians to practice their ancient and traditional religion as guaranteed by law, and
3 pledges its support to those native Hawaiians;

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5 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages the
6 Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches' Justice and Witness Team to work in partnership with the Hawai'i
7 Conference 's Witness Missional Team, and the Oklahoma Association through the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference
8 to coordinate efforts and ministry with the Native Hawaiian Religion and Culture Group of the Diamondback
9 Correctional Facility in Watonga, Oklahoma to minister to the Native Hawaiian and other Hawai'i prisoners;

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11 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on the five
12 associations of the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ as well as the Hawai'i Conference Board of
13 Directors to join in this ministry to native Hawaiian prisoners, especially those who are in continental facilities far
14 from Hawai'i;

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16 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ urges the
17 leaders in the Hawai'i State Legislature and the United States Congress to call upon the Department of Public Safety
18 in Hawai'i and the Department of Corrections in Oklahoma to recognize the need to uphold the laws of the
19 Constitution of the United States of America to allow Native Hawaiian prisoners in all the continental United States
20 facilities and the State of Hawai'i the freedom to exercise fully their religion in a non-hostile and non-retributive
21 environment.

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23 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ calls on the
24 Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches United Church of Christ through its Pāpā Makua and Luna
25 Hoʻomalu and the Conference Minister and Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Hawai'i Conference
26 United Church of Christ to urge the Department of Public Safety of the State of Hawai'i to provide for routine visits
27 from practitioners of Native Hawaiian spirituality;

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29 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages
30 through its Justice and Witness Ministries and the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ through its Witness
31 Missional Team to call upon the Corrections Corporation of America (CCA) to insure religious freedom for those
32 who practice non-Christian religion with adequately trained professionals and open the faith pods to include
33 interfaith groups.

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35 BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the Twenty-fifth General Synod of the United Church of Christ encourages and
36 supports the Association of Hawaiian Evangelical Churches United Church of Christ to work in concert with the
37 Oklahoma Association United Church of Christ and the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference UCC, the Native Hawaiian
38 Religion and Culture Group, the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM), the Justice and Witness Ministries
39 of the UCC, and other peace and justice networks of the United Church of Christ to provide advocacy and financial
40 support to expand the witness for religious freedom for all Native Hawaiian prisoners throughout the United States
41 of America.

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43 The implementation of this resolution will be by the Justice and Witness Ministries' Human Rights, Justice for
44 Women, and Transgendered Ministry—especially Criminal Justice and Human Rights, the Association of Hawaiian
45 Evangelical Churches of the Hawai'i Conference United Church of Christ and all its settings, the Oklahoma
46 Association of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference United Church of Christ as all its settings, and all other interested
47 settings of the United Church of Christ.

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49 Funding for the implementation of the resolution will be made in accordance with the overall mandates of the
50 affected agencies and funds available.